

**AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS**

1. (previously presented) A method of cutting a strip of elastomeric material into segments of a desired length, the strip having a width  $W$ , the strip being formed of a plurality of tire components, at least one of the tire components being a cord reinforced component, the cords being substantially parallel and oriented in the direction of a cutting path formed across the width  $W$  of the strip; the method comprising:

moving a cutting device into cutting engagement of the strip while supporting the strip on an anvil;

positioning the cutting edge of the cutting device at a skive angle less than 10 degrees relative to the strip and at a gap distance ( $d$ ) above the anvil slightly less than or equal to the thickness of the cord reinforced component;

cutting through the entire strip in a single cutting step and forming a segment.

2. (previously presented) The method of cutting segments of claim 1 further comprises the step of: orienting said cutting edge at an acute angle  $\beta$  relative to the strip cutting path.

3. (original) The method of cutting segments of claim 1 further comprises the steps of movably restraining the strip ahead of the cutting.

4. (previously presented) The method of cutting segments of claim 1 wherein the steps of supporting the strip include supporting the strip at an angle  $\theta_1$ , less than the skive angle  $\alpha$  on one side of the cutting path and an angle  $\theta_2$  greater than the skive angle  $\alpha$  on the opposite side of the cutting path.

5. (previously presented) The method of cutting segments of claim 4, wherein the location of the cutting plane occurs approximately at the location wherein the supporting angle changes from  $\theta_1$  to  $\theta_2$ .

Claims 6-19 (canceled)

20. (previously presented) The method of claim 4 wherein there is a discontinuity in the support surface where the support angle changes from  $\theta_1$  to  $\theta_2$ .

21. canceled.

22. (previously presented) The method of claim 1 wherein the cutting device is an ultrasonic knife.

Claims 23-36 (canceled)

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application.